

Message Text

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ORIGIN AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 EUR-12 NEA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 SIG-01
SSO-00 MMO-01 INRE-00 USIE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00
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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA NIACT IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USMISSION USNATO
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
USINT HAVANA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 011016

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: PROP, SO, ET, US

SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT STATEMENT ON JANUARY 14 WASHINGTON STAR
STORY
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1. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF DEPARTMENT PRESS STATEMENT ISSUED
SATURDAY AFTERNOON JANUARY 14:

"AN ARTICLE APPEARING IN TODAY'S WASHINGTON STAR CITES ALLE-
GATIONS, MADE MOST RECENTLY IN A DISPATCH YESTERDAY FROM
THE SOVIET NEWS AGENCY TASS, THAT THE US AGREEMENT IN

PRINCIPLE TO PROVIDE DEFENSIVE ARMS TO SOMALIA SOMEHOW STIMULATED SOMALI AGGRESSION IN THE OGADEN. THE ARTICLE ALSO CLAIMS THAT, AT THE TIME THIS AGREEMENT WAS CONVEYED TO THE SOMALIS, THE US WAS ALSO "MOVING TOWARD A THREE-WAY DEAL FOR SAUDI ARABIA TO BUY AMERICAN WEAPONS FOR SOMALIA." THE ARTICLE QUOTED THE TASS ALLEGATION THAT "MIDDLE EASTERN ALLIES OF THE UNITED STATES DELIVER AMERICAN ARMS TO SOMALIA 'IN UNMARKED CASES.' "

THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE DENIES THESE ALLEGATIONS CATEGORICALLY.

THE UNITED STATES HAS SUPPLIED NO ARMS TO SOMALIA DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY. WE HAVE SPECIFICALLY ADVISED A NUMBER OF

INTERESTED COUNTRIES THAT WE CANNOT AUTHORIZE THEM TO TRANSFER US-ORIGIN ARMS TO SOMALIA, WHETHER IN MARKED OR UNMARKED CASES.

THE UNITED STATES HAS DONE NOTHING TO STIMULATE SOMALI AGGRESSION IN THE OGADEN. QUITE THE CONTRARY, BEFORE THE OGADEN WAR BROKE OUT, WE AGREED TO PROVIDE SOMALIA WITH ARMS OF A SORT WHICH COULD BE USED ONLY TO DEFEND ITS EXISTING NATIONAL TERRITORY. HOWEVER, THIS AGREEMENT WAS ONLY "IN PRINCIPLE," SINCE THE ARMS SUPPLIES THEN IN SOMALIA'S ARSENAL WERE IN OUR VIEW MORE THAN SUFFICIENT

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FOR SOMALIA'S LEGITIMATE DEFENSIVE NEEDS. IT IS INCONCEIVABLE THAT ANY GOVERNMENT WOULD UNDERTAKE MAJOR MILITARY ACTION ON THE BASIS OF SUCH A HIGHLY LIMITED AND CONDITIONAL AGREEMENT.

WHEN THE WARFARE STARTED, WE EXPRESSED OUR OPPOSITION TO THE INVOLVEMENT OF REGULAR SOMALI FORCES ALONGSIDE THE INSURGENTS BY SUSPENDING OUR AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE UNTIL SUCH TIME AS THE OGADEN CONFLICT WERE RESOLVED.

FOR THE OFFICIAL SOVIET NEWS AGENCY TO BE REPEATING ALLEGATIONS WHICH THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT MUST KNOW TO BE FALSE IS, AT BEST, UNHELPFUL. THE SUPPLIER OF ARMS TO BOTH SIDES OF A DISPUTE BEARS A RESPONSIBILITY WHEN THOSE ARMS ARE EMPLOYED WHICH CANNOT BE DIVERTED TO OTHERS BY REPETITION OF FALSE STORIES.

2. EMBASSY SHOULD MAKE TEXT IMMEDIATELY AVAILABLE TO ETHIOPIAN AUTHORITIES, PARTICULARLY IN VIEW OF FBIS-REPORTED FOREIGN MINISTRY STATEMENT OF JANUARY 14 THAT BECAUSE OF US ACTIONS AND 12 JANUARY STATEMENTS TO PRESS BY PRESIDENT CARTER ETHIOPIA MIGHT HAVE "TO REVERSE

ITS VIEWS CONCERNING ITS RELATIONS WITH THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT."

3. COUNTRY DIRECTOR POST MANAGED SPEAK BY TELEPHONE SAME AFTERNOON WITH MOFA PERMSEC MAJOR DAWIT WOLDE-GHIORGIS WHO WAS IN NEW YORK WITH ETHIOPIAN UN PERMREP PRIOR TO HIS DEPARTURE TODAY FOR ADDIS VIA JANUARY 16-18 CONSULTATIONS IN PARIS AND LONDON. DURING DISCUSSION OF VARIETY OF FACTORS IN BILATERAL RELATIONS WHICH ALSO HAD BEEN TOUCHED UPON IN JANUARY 13 MEETING BETWEEN POST AND MOFA AMERICAN AFFAIRS DIRECTOR BERHANE DIRESSA, DAWIT ACKNOWLEDGED FOREIGN MINISTRY STATEMENT "NOT HELPFUL" BUT INSISTED THAT THOSE SUCH AS HIMSELF WHO ARE WORKING FOR GOOD US-ETHIOPIAN RELATIONS ARE HAMPERED BY AMERICAN CONFIDENTIAL

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PRESS ITEMS AND PUBLIC STATEMENTS WHICH ARE INTERPRETED

IN ETHIOPIA AS REFLECTING A US TILT TOWARD SOMALIA. DAWIT SAID THAT HE WOULD DO HIS BEST TO DEFUSE THE SITUATION IN ADDIS AND EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT THE DEPARTMENT COULD DO SAME IN WASHINGTON. VANCE

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